THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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AMERICA ON TRIAL

WHEN a ship is battling with a storm that threatens the loss of all on board, nothing can be thought about save the supreme problem of how best to meet the emergency and keep the ship afloat. Such questions as whether or not mistakes in navigation have been made which led the ship into the storm area, or amid the rocks and shoals which multiply the natural dangers of the tempest, must be ignored. But when the storm abates, even if but temporarily, with the ship still floating and still seaworthy, though battered and perhaps leaking, such questions again arise. This is more particularly the case when there seem to be clear evidences that, as the storm subsides, those responsible for the navigation and operation of the ship are proceeding on their former course—as if the lessons of the crisis meant nothing; or else as if they felt justified in all they had done, or left undone, previously, by their success, or their good fortune, in weathering the tempest.

Our contemporary, the *Christian Century*, of Chicago, which exerts so powerful an influence in Protestant social movements, has been raising some of these questions. We agree with the *Christian Century's* opinion of their supreme importance—to all who still confess, or are still influenced by, at least the cultural power of Christian principles. Watching the multiplying signs of at least partial improvement in the business situation of the country, in especial the really tremendous recovery in the value of stocks and bonds, our Chicago contemporary dares to ask whether such "prosperity" as these signs indicate may be returning is really deserving of a welcome. For unless what is meant by prosperity includes the employment, at really adequate wages, under socially decent and just conditions of employment, of the ten to twelve million workers now deprived of self-support through no fault of their own, the restoration of the paper wealth of a minority of the population will be nothing for Christians to cheer about.

The position of the working part of the population is the real crux of our social problem. We mean by "workers" not only those actually working, but also, of course, the blameless unemployed, inclusive of all the millions of American men, women and children who earn their living—or who are willing so to earn a living—by their labor, or by social services of all kinds for which, in the vast majority of cases, their remuneration is solely in wages or salaries. To say

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that this multitude is solely, or even chiefly, responsible for the creation of national wealth is, of course, a fallacy; but certainly it is the veriest truism to say that without their labor and services—and without their buying power when that power is intact—our modern industrial society could not exist. Yet even at this time, when the daily press for the most part is so busily recording, not to say enlarging, all the evidences of a reviving prosperity, there are ominous signs of very deeply rooted trouble among the workers, with graver trouble looming ahead. And this is true quite apart from, and in deadly addition to, labor's tremendous burdens of unemployment relief, and the weakening of all its organized resources by the long-continued business depression. For in spite of the "assurances" which President Hoover received from the leaders of industry, at the conference in Washington which was held after the depression was finally given official recognition, that the principle of high wages would be maintained, that assurance was flatly belied by events. Wages have gone down even more than the level of employment. Greater and wider wage reductions are in sight. Apparently, an impasse has been reached, or anyhow is perilously close at hand. On the one hand, the industrial leaders seem determined to reduce wages drastically. The railroads have served notice that a 20 percent cut must be made in that vital service. The Federation of Labor and the railroad workers both declare that further reductions will be fought uncompromisingly.

It would seem, therefore, that the whole conception of modern industry as it developed during the last twenty years in America, namely, that mass production, made possible by mechanization, required high wages and complete employment of all available workers in order to maintain prosperity, is now to be challenged. The Federation of Labor, through President Green, even threatens to give up one of its most cherished policies, namely, political non-partizanship, and intimates that the formation of a political labor party may be labor's next field of action. The amazing revolt of so many farmers in the Middle West points also to a profound upheaval in the agricultural world. An alliance between the aggrieved agricultural elements and the embittered hosts of labor, while not at present an actuality, may readily develop if the coming winter should witness an aggravation rather than a mitigation of the present crisis.

In considering the many signs of the fundamental tension in social life, the *Christian Century* remarks: "For three years the churches and all the other institutions with character-forming responsibilities have been telling themselves that out of the welter of human misery brought on by the economic and moral follies of the last decade there would come at least a number of improvements in the machinery of the social order and an access of wisdom on the part of the possessing classes. Everything that has happened in the last six weeks shows the utter delusion of any such idea. If this is prosperity that is now returning, it returns to find that we have improved nothing and learned nothing."

We think that the last sentence of this comment should bear a question mark. Have we learned nothing, or improved nothing, as a result of the visitation of disaster? For ourselves, we believe that there has been a gain. We confess that we should be in a difficulty if asked to furnish tangible proof of that belief. Perhaps the test will come very soon. "America will be on trial this winter," writes Mr. Newton D. Baker, in outlining the gigantic task facing the nation's relief and welfare organizations. And America will remain on trial even if it meets (as doubtless it will) the gigantic task of charity which immediately confronts it. For justice as well as charity is urgently demanded by the workers of America. Merely to deal with the aftermath of the industrial and financial hurricane in the spirit of Red Cross relief (noble as that spirit is in its own proper sphere)—in the spirit, that is, of merely temporary relief, of expediency, and not to attempt the necessary task of striving to avert future calamities of the sort—will not satisfy the working masses. They are stirring. They are moving. At present, they can be led, if wisely led; they are ready and most willing to coöperate, but it must be real coöperation, and not mere expedient benevolence, that they will accept. Otherwise, class division, with all the wreck and ruin which it would entail, is well-nigh certain to come. To avert that calamity is the great task for all who believe in the socially regenerative power of Christianity. Let us rejoice in all signs indicating that the storm is passing. But let us not mistake the signs of the greater storm that will arise if justice does not collaborate with charity in all dealings with the workers of the nation. Labor Day of 1932 is an historic date. May Catholic Action lead the way in making the history now in the making really consonant with Christian principles of social justice.

WEEK BY WEEK

THE SOMEWHAT heated exchange of opinion between the governments of France and Germany on the subject of disarmament has at least the advantage of forcing into the open one of the basic causes of resentment and insecurity. That Berlin has never accepted the existing situation is clear from the reams upon reams of comment published since 1920. It has insisted that the provisions concerning disarmament embedded in the Versailles Treaty apply to all powers, and that the curtailment of the German forces is legal only on the assumption that the former Allies carry out their part of the bargain. Now the Von Papen government issues a warning that if this thesis is not accepted, it will proceed to ignore the disarmament conference and maybe even withdraw from the League. That such an act would

Will Europe Disarm?

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be calamitous to the work of building up international amity need hardly be said. Europe might well revert to the status of pre-war balance of power diplomacy, excepting that nationalistic emotions are now quite considerably more acrid and dangerous than they were then. Of course Germany is a very long way indeed from being a martial power, and an embattled Left which still forms nearly a half of the nation's expressed political strength would not assent docilely to such projects as that of a revived universal military service.

ON THE other hand, the question of disarmament is not so simple as it appeared to be in 1919. Then Italy was not a powerful military nation, prepared in a way which suffices to challenge the soldierly resources of the French. Poland was not a country impelled by nearness to Russia and a convergence of acute minority problems to place most of its political emphasis upon military readiness and control. More generally, the rise of dictators did not seem at the time even a remote possibility. How, then, can or ought anybody to expect the Herriot government to sponsor any drastic curtailment of the armed power of France? Thus events have built up as neat a dilemma as statecraft was ever expected to solve. It is of course not difficult to propose theoretical compromises, based on the idea of conceding to Germany so many of the proposed Versailles Treaty revisions that the armament problem would be shoved into the background. This method is, however, far easier to talk about than to apply. In all probability the question will be greatly influenced by the amount of strength and authority which the German government can actually muster during coming weeks. The bark of the Von Papen Cabinet is worse than its bite.

IT IS hard to tell whether the most startling event of the past weeks was the birth of a yak at the moment of totality of the solar eclipse, as heralded in the headlines of the New York *Times,* or the arrival home of the bus "Diogenese" with its five research workers, after a trip of 12,000 miles over the United States, without having been able to find a single drunkard who was reformed by the prohibition law. Andrew Volstead, Mrs. Ella A. Boole and Jane Addams were among the prominent prohibitionists personally interviewed, and they were unable to give the research workers directions to a single specific case. Of course they had lots to say, but that's not the same thing. Many persons were offered but they were all individuals who had given up drink for religious, health, family or other reasons, and none had done so because the law forbade light wines and beer and strong spirits. In Phoenix, Arizona, one such was named, but when the committee of research workers found him, he was living in Elko, Nevada, where he was pointed out as the man who had not been sober in years. Sentiment over the country is rapidly turning against what the committee characterized as "the $24,000,000,000 experiment," and this was said to be especially noticeable in the South where the legalizing of the sale and manufacture of liquor is desired for relief from taxation. The trip was sponsored by various groups who are of the same opinion and to them, the failure of the trip was its success.

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Business Is Business

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Everything's in a Name

WE HAVE not yet seen the booklet sent out by the United States Geographic Board, in its capacity of official arbiter of the government's use of foreign proper names; but what we read about it fills us with sadness. Can it be true that our state correspondence will no longer refer to Cologne, Vienna, Lisbon, but will instead write Koln, Wien, Lisboa—on the mere ground that these forms are correct? There may be diplomatic reasons for the reform, of course, though it is hard to believe that common English usage in this matter has been challenged at this late date; only an unqualified pedant could fail to see that these immemorial "incorrect" forms are themselves tributes to the places they designate; they mark an interest and a reference so common that it long ago crystallized into a separate word. The reform more probably reflects those mere processes of standardizing that no one seems able to hold out against today. We are all so much closer to each other, in time and space, than we were at the period when our languages were being made (on this same sound principle of mispronunciation) that it is automatic and irresistible to use as many of the same forms, whether of language or of living, as we can. Well. If official usage really adopts the "correct," that is, the autochthonous, versions of the names of foreign cities, undoubtedly general usage will follow; and our language and ideas will gain nothing (that we can see), and lose some scores of words which cycles past have richly loaded with connotation. What meaning attaches, save to the ultra-sophisticated eye, to "Koln water" or "Koln cathedral"? How do you find yourself reacting to the phrases "Wiener waltzes" and "Wiener charm"? And what of Italy? Even if the Geographic Board were so inconsistent as to stop short of the Mecca of tourists (which we have no reason to suppose), is it thinkable that Signor Mussolini would pass up a real chance of having Italian names pronounced the Italian way? Are we doomed to speak of the gondolas of Venezia or the poet of Firenze; though Roma is a potent name, are we doomed, for Roma, to lose—Rome?

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"EVEN now when I have achieved some degree of success in my chosen field, I find so many doubt my wisdom, judgment and ability," wistful Rudy Vallée is quoted as saying revealingly in another of those little books popular of late that confound our most publicized personalities with their own words. The newest, "Who's Hooey," published by Dutton and Company, affords not only some moments of idle amusement but also has the proper, wholesome caustic effect of good satire. For instance, it explains much to have Calvin Coolidge say for himself, "Whenever I do indulge my sense of humor, it always gets me into trouble," and there is mead for thought in Henry Ford's statement, "I don't like to read books; they muss up my mind." Possibly he believes also that people who ride around in one of his own products with that blank, mesmerized Sunday-touring look have no sympathy with disturbing their minds. On the other hand, Rupert Hughes has not only read but also written many books, yet he can deliver himself of a statement surely far from mussy: "Love is a wonderful thing and highly desirable in marriage." Mr. Ford we are sure would echo that without misgivings, so whether one musses one's mind evidently depends on the kind of books one reads. Declares Aimée Semple Macpherson with the perspicacity and command of homely phrase that has won her great followings, "A husband is like an egg. If you keep him in hot water too long he becomes hard-boiled." A nosegay follows: Al Capone, "I ain't going to leave a lot of dough for my wife to spend on another hoodlum"; Estelle Taylor, "I'm sorry Jack [Dempsey] did anything so unsportsmanlike as getting a divorce from me"; the Right Reverend James Cannon, jr., "Beer is an unpalatable and sickening drink"; and Herbert Hoover, "If it's not one thing it's another."

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in large holdings. With stocks to be had for a few dollars many small investors bought a few. This they did not with any idea that they might make a fortune but with the idea that they might make enough for a new car, maybe, or another payment on the mortgage. When General Motors shares were recently selling for around $10.00 a share, it did not require a great deal of courage or great wealth to invest and become a shareholder in a future prosperity which will have a broader and therefore, we hope, a firmer foundation.

THE PLOW IN SEASON

IT WOULD be hard to deny that the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems is one of the truly striking developments of corporate Catholicism in this country since the war. Organized originally to promote study of the social encyclicals and other documents of basic importance, it gradually became an organization ceaselessly active to foster better relationships between the various groups of industrial society. This year, however, the conference took still another step forward. By meeting in unison with the Federated Colored Catholics in America, it made possible discussion which should throw a great deal of helpful light upon as difficult a problem as either Church or State confronts. The Catholic Negro, one must add, has done much to effect a really impressive organization. His leaders are surprisingly able and energetic; his cause has won the devoted support of numerous priests and laymen.

We shall not attempt to review here the many addresses and papers which marked the three days (September 3, 4 and 5) of the New York convention. The first day was appropriately given over to consideration of the Negro in industry; and the program was arranged to afford a maximum number of points of view, all of them challenging and suggestive. Religious and interracial subjects were discussed on the remaining days, one notable event being the receipt of a papal letter of endorsement. So much could not pass in review without producing interesting clashes of opinion. Indeed the argument sometimes waxed fierce, without any loss of decorum, because the speakers were often very, very much in earnest. On the whole, few conventions of which we have had personal knowledge have been either more alive, entertaining or impressive.

What then can one say briefly concerning the actual status of the Negro in civil and ecclesiastical society? The answer necessarily depends to a considerable extent upon what part of the country one has in mind. Perhaps the South differentiates between white and black less by reason of historical events or of race than because of a far-reaching cleavage between master and servant. To it the Negro has been and doubtless still is just "help," to be had cheaply and to be kept in its place. Where the servant-master relationship is accepted in charity and good faith, the consequence is often a touching loyalty and a noble solicitude. We have seen too much of good family life in the Southland not to realize how frequently the Negro's lot as a servant is fortunate in a way the Northern industrial worker's practically never is. But of course this is only one side of the story. The unfortunate determination to keep the colored man down, to oppose his training and his chances in life, must of necessity fail. Pigment is not a matter of intelligence or ambition. These last the Negro often possesses to such a marked degree that in spite of handicaps he makes his way to the top.

The Negro in the North is less obviously discriminated against. Of course the "color line" has social implications which are presumably permanent. Opposition to miscegenation is in itself enough to make all dreams of absolute "interracial equality" quite idle. That point, however, is normally conceded, even though hardly anyone looks upon the existing situation as ideal. Vastly more serious is the rôle of the Negro worker in industry. On the one hand, he is discriminated against on several counts; on the other hand, partly by reason of that discrimination, he often offers to work for less than the white laborer will accept. This is a condition which, to our minds, can be remedied only by organization. And yet the very word "organization" tends to throw a blanket of vague speculation over a struggle which is so beset with perils, problems and disappointments. One of the interesting matters brought up for consideration at the recent convention was precisely the Negro's belief that existing unions tend to hamper rather than aid him.

If, then, the problem is vast and thorny in these regions, can one expect to find the sky cloudless in the realm of faith? Theoretically, to be sure, the Catholic Church recognizes no differences of race or nation. But it is hard to live up to the sublime Christian code, and existing social or economic interests too frequently becloud religious activity even where personal motives are of the best. The very texture of pioneer Catholicism in this country implied the existence of Catholic "groups." Where one of these was Irish, another German and still a third Italian, how could it be expected that the colored folk would occasion deep concern? And later on, when "being American" was a new ferment of group consciousness in many places, little more attention to the horizon could be expected. Nevertheless there has been a marked, almost a startling, change. Possibly this has its origin in the energetic apostolate of individual bishops and priests, who grasped the situation before the American Catholic generally was aware of it. Almost every large city has its significant example of this work and of the fruits it has borne. Today the idea has caught fire. We personally look upon it as one of the great contemporary religious objectives. Of course it is unreasonable to think that Negro America can be converted faster than white America, though in several respects there does seem to be a better chance. What matters is that the true definition of the Church is once more appreciably nearer realization.

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POLITICAL EVENTS

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

ABOUT this time, as the almanacs used to say, look out for the question, "Who is going to be elected?" In fact, every political specialist gets it all through the early stages of the campaign, which begin in early spring and last until late September and often later. It is probable that a political expert like Mark Sullivan has had it asked of him a dozen times a day since April, and that the dose increases daily and is at its height now; and that his answer is always the same.

Sometimes, but not often, the question is varied to "Which are the doubtful states?" or "How is New York going to go?" or some other state. But how perilous it is to classify the doubtful states in the early or even late stages is proved by the illustrative fact that in 1916 nobody dreamed that California, which decided the election by voting for Wilson, was a doubtful state—not even on election day. At this moment Massachusetts is a doubtful state, but may be a dead certainty within a month; and so it goes.

Nevertheless, this delusion is so persistent and so universal that it becomes a duty to inform the public that not until much later will anybody know, and that even at the last moment very few will come within gunshot of certainty. If anybody knew, it would not be the newspaper writers, it would be the politicians. The fact that the politicians don't know is proved by the fact that they keep desperately fighting—and, what is more, spending money—until the day of election itself. If they did know, there would be no need for a campaign; there would be no national committees; they would all be sitting back placidly waiting for the forecast inevitable.

Later it will be possible to classify the doubtful states; and it must be remembered, like an axiom, that it is only the doubtful states that count. The solid South will vote Democratic; Vermont will vote Republican. In such sections the national committees will go through only mechanical motions; the fighting will be in the states known to be doubtful, a thing nobody knows now, and when the time comes they will be listed in this series of articles. It will be in those states that Mr. Roosevelt will be at his most furious, and so will whoever will be doing the fighting for Hoover—who, at present, seems determined to do no personal fighting himself and to stick to his salaried job. He does not relish a scramble; in 1928 he showed himself in public as little as he could, and this year he has, as President, a far better reason for doing what he likes and not what is distasteful to him.

It never occurs to the eager questioner (and his name is Legion) who asks the expert, "Won't you forecast for me what states Hoover will carry?" that if the expert could answer that question he could make a million dollars, merely by betting. Yet the trustful questioner treasures the answer, if the expert gives one, as inside stuff. Did it never occur to the seeker after knowledge what the phrase "doubtful states" means? It means that they are doubtful. If anybody knew, including Hoover and Roosevelt, how they would go, the two national committees would stop begging funds and expending money, and tranquilly await the sure result.

Experts! When I first adventured into national politics in the last century, it was as a pupil of E. G. Dunnell, the sage expert of the New York *Times,* famed for keeping his feet on the ground and never being wrong. His nickname, however, was "Keep-your-eye-on-Iowa Dunnell." I inquired, and found that in the campaign of 1888 the *Times* had sent the old sage through the "doubtful" states to report what his magic eye (and it was magic) found. Sojourning in Iowa and getting the straightest of tips, he became convinced that it was doubtful and likely to go for Cleveland; so he began his despatch, "Keep your eye on Iowa." When it went for Harrison by the usual rousing Republican majority, that monicker was fixed on him. It never left him.

In 1912 Samuel G. Blythe produced, for the *Saturday Evening Post,* a decisive article mourning over the passing of Theodore Roosevelt, how poor Roosevelt wouldn't carry a single Republican state primary and was gone for good. As it takes a few weeks to print a *Saturday Evening Post* article, this one blared forth on the news-stands the identical week when Roosevelt carried every Republican primary that was held—that is, a real primary; Wisconsin and New York were manipulated. After that Blythe never made a prediction, and was said to have announced that he would never write a line prophesying that the sun would rise.

Candidates! The night of his disastrous defeat in 1896, Bryan went to bed securely convinced that he would be elected by a landslide. Even that sanest of men, Theodore Roosevelt, running on a hopeless third ticket in 1912, was sanguine enough to use the expression to me, "If I make the riffle"; he was too sensible to think he had a sure thing, but even he thought he had a chance—and he carried four states.

There never was a better politician than Abraham Lincoln, and yet in 1864 he was so sure that McClellan would beat him that he wrote a letter to his Cabinet announcing his purposes after his defeat, and gave it to them, sealed and not to be opened until McClellan's victory. McClellan carried three states. Four years before, Stephen A. Douglas had made a furious campaign in "the doubtful states," refusing John Bell's proposition that they both retire since neither had a chance; and Douglas got just twelve electoral votes. In 1904 Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge,

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no mean politicians, thought Alton B. Parker would surely beat them; and Roosevelt was elected by a monumental landslide. Parker didn't even carry his own state and was the first Democrat since reconstruction to lose Missouri. In 1928 Al Smith thought he was going to be elected; "And look what happened to me," he said at the recent Democratic Convention.

National committees! Here is Chairman Farley conceding that Hoover will carry Maine and Vermont only. In 1884 the Republican national committee honestly believed for days that Blaine had been elected. But the classic instance is 1876, when the Republican national committee closed up shop early and went to bed on election night, convinced that Tilden had won. William E. Chandler, studying the returns in the small hours, got doubtful, and he and John C. Reid (managing editor of the *Times*) went up to committee headquarters and roused the chairman, Zachariah Chandler, out of a sound sleep. After listening to their figures for a while, the chairman grew more hopeful, and sent a claim-everything despatch to the "doubtful" states. The Republican candidate was ultimately seated, by the help of Democratic votes in Congress. In 1800 and 1824 nobody knew who was elected and the result was thrown into the House of Representatives, where in 1800, according to Senator James A. Bayard, three votes would have seated Burr and not Jefferson. In 1824 the House settled the question by seating the most obviously minority candidate before it, John Quincy Adams. Even William H. Crawford had got more votes than he.

The *Literary Digest's* polls achieve astonishing approach to accuracy, but don't quite reach it. This year it put North Carolina in the dry column by a poll, just before that state went wet by 100,000, which is no small majority in North Carolina; and in a Democratic primary at that. Oh, yes, we all know that some other questions entered into Senator Morrison's defeat, but they always do, in every election; this year some people will vote against Hoover because he didn't pardon Tom Mooney, which no President has the power to do, or for him because they don't like some Tammany alderman whom Hoover never heard of. In 1928 I knew of a Democrat who voted against Smith because the State Legislature (which was Republican) had cut down his pay and that of others in his line of work. But, actually, the issue in North Carolina was prohibition.

The most sagacious political observer now writing, Clinton W. Gilbert of the New York *Evening Post,* has been scouring New York and New Jersey, and announces that those states "will"—not "may"—go for Hoover. With all his respect for Gilbert's analytical powers, this writer will continue to prefer the word "may" until the doubtful states clarify a little more. In 1928 Carter Field of the *Herald Tribune,* equally sagacious, toured the South and had the nerve to say that some Southern states were likely to vote for Hoover. Everybody else thought Field was crazy, until election day. But even Field didn't take his courage in his hands until October, and when he did he reported what he saw.

The only candidate I have met in many years of campaigning who knew he was going to be elected was Calvin Coolidge, and even that uncanny calculator did not feel sure of it until ten days before the election of 1924. With that exception, nobody knows or has known until the first Wednesday after the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. If anybody did, the campaigners would not exhaust themselves by campaigning. It is tiring work, and the Borahs and the Pat Harrisons would stay home and rest. Of course they do know more than Jack-in-the-Box; but as Mr. Dooley said, "I'm the only man who knows anythin' about [whatever the subject was] an' I know nawthin'."

Who could have predicted, in 1916, that a turnover of 1,500 votes in Republican California would elect Wilson? The election crowds that night went home sure that Hughes had been elected. Who could have predicted that a turnover of 579 votes in New York would elect Cleveland in 1884, and defeat Blaine, who by all the signs should have been elected—and probably was, for many more than 579 non-existent votes were counted for Cleveland in John Y. McKane's personal kingdom of Gravesend, to say nothing of Long Island City and the lower East Side?

> My gran'ther's rule was safer'n 'tis to crow:
> Don't never prophesy—onless ye know.

Does this, then, mean that there are to be no doubtful states and no battleground? No, there will be and are now doubtful states, and they will be the battlefield. The purpose of this article is to show the situation at the beginning of September; the campaign itself does not begin until well on in September, despite the irresistible delusion that it begins as soon as the nominations are made. One of the reasons for the late start is that not until near the end of September is it known with any certainty what the doubtful states, the battleground, are, and where the fire should be concentrated. At present every state but Vermont and the solid South could be called a doubtful state. Even in Maine, last spring, I heard old-time Republicans saying, "Well, things may improve when Roosevelt gets in." He wasn't nominated yet, but they knew he would be.

But September is no index to November. Already Hoover's dogged three-year fight against depression is leading the uncertain back. To Norman Thomas I said, "A bolter in August is seldom a bolter in November." He answered, with a meaning smile arising from many experiences, "Don't I know it?" He is too experienced a man to count on the summer bolters staying put in his camp in November. With this knowledge of many years in politics in my mind, I am confident to be able to list the doubtful states later on in these articles, and even to tell the probabilities about their destination. This article deals with the period which most voters do not know to be messy and unreliable, and to tell why.

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MEDIAEVAL ANTICIPATION

By JAMES J. WALSH

THE MOST surprising chapter in our rapidly developing history of the middle ages concerns the anticipation of some of our most modern inventions by the men of a time that used to be stigmatized as backward and unprogressive. Friar Bacon in the thirteenth century foresaw that a time would come when carriages would run over the land without men or horses pulling them, and boats would travel over the sea without oars or sails. He was quite sure that men would be able to invent "engines" with which they would be able to fly. And even that was not all. It has recently come to light that the English Franciscan foretold with astounding definiteness the possibility of rays of light of various kinds penetrating denser objects so as to enable men to see the interior of opaque bodies. This anticipation of the X-rays is even more startling than Bacon's other prophecies, though not more startling than the anticipation of anaesthesia for surgery which was made not only in idea but also in practice in Bacon's day.

No wonder it has been suggested that it would be worth while to go over Bacon's works and pick out especially abstruse or even absurd passages and hand them over to modern scientists as possible suggestions of inventions and discoveries to be made. He has definite hints of so many modern inventions and discoveries that there probably remain others in his works that might be revealed to the progressive scientist who set himself the task of finding out the significance and application of some of Bacon's esoteric expressions.

Those who are inclined to think that Roger Bacon represented a solitary phenomenon among the scientists of the thirteenth century can readily find abundant evidence of the acute penetration of his contemporaries in a great many definitely scientific lines of thought. There is even a second English Franciscan, though the Franciscans are not often thought of as scientifically progressive, who has been attracting no little attention in recent years. This is Bartholomeus Anglicus, Bartholomew the Englishman, who wrote sometime before the middle of the thirteenth century a single-volume encyclopaedia of information with regard to all the subjects mentioned in the Scriptures, with special emphasis on the things of nature. His work was done for his contemporaries but continued to be a frequently consulted source of information for some four hundred years after his time, and undoubtedly reveals, better than any other work that we have, the mental attitude of these thirteenth-century scholars toward the problems of life and the universe around them. That much of Bartholomew's information anticipated our own time is surprising.

It would be impossible to give any idea of the immense amount of information to be found in Bartholomew—all of it curious, some of it now quite absurd, but not a little of it containing a germ of knowledge that anticipated modern thought. "On Medicine," the seventh book of his encyclopaedia, has been the subject of special study in recent years. The ordinary impression would be that this medical section would surely be full of absurdities. It is, though he has all the apparatus of therapeutics that was in common use down to the middle of the nineteenth century, including poultices, ointments, baths, purges, leeches, cupping, venesection and nearly as much about laxatives as we have at the present time. So far as therapeutics is concerned, however, it must not be forgotten that our own Oliver Wendell Holmes said that if all the drugs had been thrown into the sea it would be better for man and worse for the fishes, and a distinguished French physician of the twentieth century said, "The therapeutics of any generation is always absurd to the next succeeding generation."

Bartholomew is surprisingly modern with regard to many things in medicine. For instance, he emphasizes the fact that rest is an excellent thing but may be indulged in too much:

> Stagnant water corrupts, iron rusts, and the happy mean between excess and lack of rest must be observed.

There must be rest of mind as well as of body but not too much of either. He warns about the danger of too much rest breeding evil humors and bringing sickness in its train. He divides headache into an affection from without, as from a blow on the head, or from within. It often comes from disturbance of the stomach. He dwells on the headache that comes from the taking of strong wine and he tries to locate the cause of the different headaches, forehead, occiput, right and left, so as to differentiate their origin. His capitulum on catarrh is particularly interesting because he divides it into two kinds, one of which comes from hot air and the other from cold air. The one is sometimes still called summer catarrh, or hay fever, and the other is a common cold. When the running rheum comes from heat, "the face is red with red veins mainly in the running eyes. There are also hot tears biting in the eyes." When it comes from cold, there is fever felt deep within. For summer catarrh he recommends external remedies, and for colds purging and laudanum. Here is the origin, seven hundred years ago, of Dover's powder for colds and of the popular vogue for laxative remedies to abort a cold.

The most surprising chapter in Bartholomew, however, is that on insanity. In Bartholomew's day, as in our own, they were trying to locate the seat of insanity. So he says:

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> Mania is infection of the foremost cell of the head with privation of imagination, like as melancholy is the infection of the middle cell of the head with privation of reason.

Then come the causes of insanity, some from the mind or soul and some from the body.

> Madness cometh sometime of passions of the soul, as of business and great thoughts [overdoing it], of sorrow and of too great study and of dread.

Those are the mental causes. Then come the bodily:

> . . . sometime of the biting of a mad dog or other venomous beast, sometime of melancholy meats [overstimulating food] and sometime of the drink of strong wine. And as the causes be diverse, the tokens and signs be diverse. For some cry and leap and hurt and wound themselves and other men [mania], and some darken and hide themselves in privy and secret places [melancholia]. The medicine [treatment] of them is that they be bound so as not to hurt themselves and other men. They must be refreshed and comforted and withdrawn from cause of dread and matter of busy thoughts [taken out of their environment] and they must be gladded with instruments of music and some deal be occupied.

Musical entertainment and the occupation cure are supposed to be new in psychiatry. But here they are, seven hundred years ago. One thing seems even newer: Bartholomew lived in a period of great surgery.

> If purgations and electuaries heal not, recourse must be had to surgery.

Mark you, he has not a word to say anywhere about possession by evil spirits as a cause of insanity. That came in with witchcraft in the seventeenth century. Is it any wonder that Bartholomew is attracting attention once more?

Some idea of the way that Bartholomew was read may be gathered from the details of the distribution of the book. It was written in Latin, of course, because that was the language of scholars, indeed of all who could read and write, but it rapidly made its way over Europe. Practically all the important houses of the Franciscans had copies of it in the original, and many of the other religious orders turned to it as a ready fountain of information. As a result of this wide diffusion, manuscript copies of it are to be found in all the important libraries of Europe, and most of them have more than one copy. After a century of this popularity, as the modern vernacular languages were just beginning to assert themselves, translations began to be made. Shortly after the middle of the fourteenth century there was a French translation, and then a Spanish translation in 1372, with a little later a Dutch translation, and then finally an English translation made by Trevisa just before the end of the fourteenth century.

William Morris, the English poet, printer and decorator, said of it:

> Even apart from its interest as showing the tendency of men's minds in days when science did actually tell them "fairy-tales," the book is a delightful one in its English garb, for the language is as simple as if the author were speaking by word of mouth, and at the same time as pleasant and not lacking a certain quaint floweriness which makes it all the easier to retain the subject-matter of the book.

The title of it was "The Properties of Things," and it was written for confessors and parish priests, so that they might be able to answer the questions of their penitents and parishioners with regard to anything and everything mentioned in the Scriptures. The editor of a modern English edition (London, 1892), recently republished, says that it was

> an encyclopedia of similes for the benefit of the village preaching friar, written for men without deep—almost without any—learning, assuming no previous information and giving a fairly clear statement of the state of the knowledge of the time.

It might be expected that it would be so full of absurdities that within a generation or two after it had been written it would cease to attract attention. But this was far from being the case, for it was one of the earliest printed books, being set in type scarcely more than a dozen years after the invention of printing; and it was reprinted many times. Probably a score of editions were printed before 1501: a dozen in Latin are known, and there is a series of at least four French translations, besides a Dutch, a Spanish and an English translation.

For English-speaking people, the most interesting fact about Bartholomew is that his encyclopaedia was probably the most read book during the Elizabethan period. He was the favorite author of Shakespeare. The similes in Shakespeare with regard to natural objects always have light thrown on them by Bartholomew. Saeger, in his "Natural History in Shakespeare's Time," has more than a hundred pages of quotations from Bartholomew that help in the understanding of Shakespeare. And nearly every other writer in "the spacious days of great Eliza" was familiar with Bartholomew. Ben Jonson and Spenser, as well as Marlowe and Massinger, have frequent quotations from and references to him. Drayton, Lyly and Lodge are deeply in his debt. The editor of an abbreviated edition of Bartholomew (London, 1892) says that Chester and Dubartas write page after page of rhyme all but versified direct from Bartholomew. No wonder that Ireland when concocting his Shakespeare forgeries very cleverly chose Bartholomew as one of the books in which an imitation of Shakespeare's signature was written on the title page so as to add verisimilitude to his claims.

Surely Roger Bacon was no solitary phenomenon in the science of the thirteenth century, and there must have been many such scholarly men as Bartholomew in that precious period, though the vicissitudes of time have kept their works from us.

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TRADE IN THE NEW EMPIRE

By M. GRATTAN O'LEARY

Beyond any question the Imperial Economic Conference led to conclusions of great industrial importance to the world at large and to the United States in particular. Mr. O'Leary summarizes for readers of THE COMMONWEAL *the chief developments and difficulties, holding that foremost among the last was "reconciling economic nationalism with imperial economic unity." Regarding some of his statements there may be legitimate difference of opinion. Thus many would say in behalf of the United States that the economic trouble between it and Canada began with Canada's negation of reciprocity.—The Editors.*

IT IS a striking commentary upon these times that the world paid more attention to the externals of the Imperial Economic Conference than to its objectives and conclusions. Thus while the press of the United States and, indeed, of the empire itself, gave columns to descriptions of its pomp and circumstance, and to the drama of its conflicts, little was told of its practical achievements.

It is not that its glamor was lacking in significance. No one with historical imagination could fail to be impressed by certain of its outward aspects. Calling together representatives of peoples from the seven seas, voicing the aspirations of 400,000,000 human beings of all races and creeds and colors, it was a living demonstration of the peculiar and continuing power of the British Empire. Under its new title of the British Commonwealth of Nations, that empire preserves much of its old prestige and grandeur in holding together peoples and governments of divergent views and interests. Something of the old glitter of Mr. Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria" may have departed from such imperial conclaves, but their true significance remains as a standing tribute to the political genius of the British race. It knows how to yield and compromise and adjust itself to the variations of democracy, managing the while to hold its sea-divided colonies and dominions in an unfettered loyalty to the Mother of Parliaments. In its amazing vitality it may be said of the British Empire that the more it changes, the more it remains the same thing.

For the world, however, and particularly for the United States, the Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference was much more than a political spectacle. These statesmen of the British Empire did not meet to devise a policy of imperial isolation, to work themselves aloof from "lesser breeds without the law." But while they were imperialists without being isolationists, their purpose nevertheless was to reroute a vast bulk of the world's trade, to prosper the British peoples by trade agreements among themselves. For more than three decades Great Britain has seen her world trade decline. She has seen her imports exceed her exports in increasing volume with the years; has seen her commerce diminished on the seas; witnessed her dominions and colonies, once profitable customers, become her keen competitors. When with these things came greater British debt and taxation and unemployment, some radical expedient became vital for restoration of her trade. Imperial preferences pointed the way.

What was clearly Britain's interest became, for different reasons, the interests of the dominions. There was the case of Canada. For more than forty years Canada found her greatest trading area in the United States. Steadily refusing to mix her imperialism with her trade, she became the second best customer of the United States, purchased more than 18 percent of the total of American exports, reached a point where, in 1930, her imports from the republic represented the enormous value of nearly $900,000,000.

Then came adverse tariff action by the United States. The Fordney-McCumber schedules of 1922 had all but excluded Canada's natural products, had struck a heavy blow at Canadian agriculture. When on top of this came the Hawley-Smoot Act, cutting Canada's sales to the United States by more than $300,000,000 a year, the dominion became resentful. Canadians could not understand why the United States should penalize its best customer. And as time went on, and friendly gestures to Washington brought nothing but still higher tariffs and dwindling Canadian exports, Ottawa began to turn from Washington, to make overtures to London. Messrs. Hawley and Smoot were, in a sense, the fathers of the Imperial Economic Conference.

It was not that Canada wished to retaliate against the United States. It was simply that with her exportable surplus of natural and manufactured products barred from American markets, and with a lost hope that Washington would change its ways, she determined that steps must be taken to sell her goods in other lands. This, and to buy from those countries to whom she sold.

The Imperial Economic Conference may not have carried out this determination. The chief obstacle barring the way to its complete success was the difficulty of reconciling economic nationalism with imperial economic unity. The various members of the British "family of nations" were determined to maintain a fairly exclusive home market against any and all industrial invaders, and it required an extraordinarily robust mixture of imperial sentiment and desire for expanding markets to overcome this determination. In order to secure a market for her wheat and meats and base metals in Great Britain, Canada necessarily had to buy more of British iron and steel and British textiles, had to endanger, in some degree, her own manufacturers. The compromises which resulted defeated all grandiose policies like that of empire free trade.

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But while the conference failed to achieve anything like a vast scheme of empire commercial union, it did take steps which, inevitably, will switch hundreds of millions of dollars of United States' trade to within the empire.

Canada has given to the United Kingdom free entry, or new preferences, or extended margins of preferences, on 220 items of her customs tariff. All of this, or most of it, will mean increased Canadian purchases from Britain, diminished Canadian purchases from the United States. In addition, Canada has extended to Britain a "competitive tariff" throughout the entire range of her customs duties. And she has reduced her duties on British cottons and woolens, on British iron and steel, on chemicals, on a lengthy list of other major products. In return she has received from Britain substantial preferences for the natural products which the Hawley-Smoot tariff barred from the United States.

It is yet too early to say with any accuracy what these changes will mean to the future of the trade relations between Canada and the United States. But what is amply clear is that there has been a substantial damming of the flow of commerce between the two countries, and that unless there be some radical change of policy on the part of Washington in the immediate years ahead, the trade stream will become less and less. Speaking to the concluding session of the conference, Mr. Bennett for Canada, and Mr. Stanley Baldwin for England, said that they had but laid a foundation upon which future empire governments might build. The character of that edifice will depend in large measure upon the attitude of the United States. The Canadian people do not relish a policy of commercial isolation from their United States neighbors. Geography, they are convinced, prohibits that. But with all the goodwill in the world, they are yet determined that their trade on this continent cannot be all one way, that the United States, if it wishes to sell, must agree to buy. A friendly gesture from Washington now, or within the coming year, might change a lot of commercial history for both the British Empire and the United States, in the decades immediately ahead.

CONVALESCENT CHILDREN

By JOAN WOODLIN

A LITTLE back from the Norbeck Pike, on one of those rolling hills which make Maryland so attractive, stands a charming homelike house commanding a pleasing view of the surrounding country. The sign at the entrance reads "Christ Child Fresh Air Farm" which, interpreted, means "fairyland" to many of the wee population of the District. For this is the "Christ Child Fresh Air Farm and Convalescent Home" founded by Miss Mary Merrick for the convalescent children of Washington. Twenty acres of cultivated land stretch to right and left. The house with its green shutters and generous porches is surrounded with lawns, flowers and trees. There are barns in the back, a sloping meadow to one side which invites hours of play, and just at the drop of the meadow, a swimming pool.

When motoring by, as many do, for the capital lies only twenty miles to the south, it is a temptation to enter this charming spot and make a tour around the premises. This will reveal more secret joys than the first entrancing glimpse suggested. For one finds fruits and flowers, sliding boards and swings and a small cottage called Our Lady's Cottage which shelters little guests who need special care. A big barn stands nearby, with curtains in the windows. This is obviously unusual, and as the big door swings back there appears not piles of hay, that have the first right of occupancy, but a spacious play-room that would delight the heart of any child: a splendid new flooring, pictures on the wall, a stage, a dollhouse, a piano, games and plenty of light and air from the little barn windows and swinging half-doors.

The main house the children call the "Happy House." With its well-equipped interior, it is an up-to-date convalescent home for the children of the poor, filling a need which has never been filled until now in Washington, and indeed in only a few localities in the East.

A statue of the Christ Child greets the visitor as he enters the hall, for this is His house, and all are welcome to visit His guests, the children. There are light and airy dormitories, a play-room, reception-room, office, bright spacious dining-room with individual tables and chairs, and a chapel.

It is the end of the rest hour. A bell rings and a happy group of youngsters comes tumbling down the stairs, to enjoy an afternoon of games and swimming or, if the physical condition does not permit things so strenuous, to have quiet recreation with the nurses. The hills will echo to the mirth and joy of children's voices.

Story-telling is a favorite pastime and commands unwavering attention, except when little Jimmie, who has never before seen a live cow, must run and see "if the cow is still there."

There are two registered nurses, a recreational director who gives a course throughout the year in occupational therapy, three attendants and the necessary help. The house is full, thirty-two children of school age and thirty-two more on the waiting list. These little convalescents, sent from the hospitals or direct from their homes by the doctor, as the case may be, are received regardless of ability to pay or religious affiliation, and remain in the home a month, two months, or more, until dismissed by the attendant physician. Some stay

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as long as six months, even a year if necessary, until health is entirely restored.

Most of the cases are cardiac, some so severe that they require a complete rest in bed for several months; but the rooms are bright and sunny and, with the amusements provided, there is little or no complaint from these less fortunate patients. In one bed lies a little fellow suffering from rheumatism in his feet, but more from the ache in his heart for the mother who has recently committed suicide. The nurses are very tender in their care of him—he never guesses why, but he misses his mother less than he did. Then there is the little fellow who cries with fright when anyone comes near him. He has not recovered from the fearful nightmare of being shut up in a barn with rats and mice for his strange companions. But, little by little, he finds that all barns are not so infested, and all foster-mothers are not alike.

There is no distinction made for those who may contribute a small amount. The little girl whose father can give a mite toward her sustenance receives no better care than the young Chinese brothers who come with empty hands, showing a preference for the bright red sweaters, with brass buttons. "I smarty, Miss," one says. "I hide red jackets under pile so nobody findy them and me and my brother we wear them. I smarty!"

Besides these convalescents recovering from the various diseases of childhood, there are many conditions of undernourishment not surprising in a group of underprivileged children whose food at home is insufficient. Given wholesome meals provided with studied deliberation, their weight increases daily, much to the discomfiture of the little pioneer who begged the nurses not to tell the doctor how much he had gained lest he might be discharged!

The efficiency of the work being carried on is evident from the fact that every child dismissed from the home is so improved physically that the doctors have testified that, whereas formerly the little patients dismissed from hospitals constantly returned to them, there are no return trips since the home has been opened.

This is the children's "fairy-land," but the way it grew is the best part of the fairy tale—one of "God's fairy-tales" which He told to one of His children and she followed each inspiration that He gave.

Miss Merrick became early in life an invalid and loved children and nature, God's most precious gifts to us. Because of this the Christ Child Fresh Air Farm and Convalescent Home exists today.

The Christ Child Society was founded by Miss Mary Merrick in Washington, D. C., from where it has radiated to thirty-three cities. It has clothed infants and children for many years, has opened centers for their instruction in useful sciences and religion, and has wider settlement activities. At Christmas it has given joy to thousands of neglected waifs. But there was nothing for the hot summer days when children wilt on the steps of city houses—houses so close there is scarcely breathing space between—until there came to the foundress the first whisperings of the fairy-tale, and she determined the children must have a country home of their very own.

Characteristically, the inspiration was an invitation to immediate action. From her invalid chair she sent a note to a faithful old friend and helper in all her previous works, one of God's saints whose hidden lives are a strength and inspiration. Miss Leonide Delarue's wise counsel never failed to guide into the right channels her young friend's projects for the little ones. And she knew just such a place as Miss Merrick wanted: a farm not too far from town where children could be boarded for a small sum, five at a time until all the weeks were run and all the children satisfied; and a couple in mediocre circumstances who lived in the suburbs, they would be "juste l'affaire," was her encouraging conclusion.

It was a simple home well in the country near a suburb of Washington known as Silver Spring, not too far from the cars to make transportation easy, for it was before the days of motors. There was ample room to spare in the little farm house, and a motherly soul in residence.

Thus in the year 1892, pioneer fresh air work for the children of the District was established. And that first summer thirty-six children were made stronger and happier for their outing and the care that was given them by the house mother and two volunteers who gave up their summers to the work. Each year increasing numbers of children were benefited. So attached did the farmer's wife become to her charges that parting from them was a constantly renewed hardship, and she finally adopted and brought up two children whose home had been broken up. Some of the children who were threatened with tuberculosis were kept at the farm all the year at the society's expense and through this wise precaution their recovery was assured. So the good work continued for twenty successive summers.

The beneficial results of the undertaking made the need of a permanent fresh air farm evident to the board. The home that had given health and joy to so many children was to be had for the price of $7,000, but there was only $1,000 in hand. Not dismayed by this small amount, the foundress asked counsel of a wise and devoted friend. His advice put wind into her sails: "If you have the courage to buy a $7,000 farm with $1,000, go ahead!" With characteristic courage she did go ahead full sail. Where the balance was coming from was impossible to tell, but the Christ Child was not far away and His bank is never empty. In an amazing way the money grew.

The following August the little farm became the coveted possession of the society. It was the first fresh air farm established for the poor of the capital city, and it remained the happy home of the children for a period of many years.

Nature the kind old nurse took the child upon her knee
Saying: This is a story book the Father has written for thee.

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And so it remained until the year 1922 when the report read: "Applicants are being turned away." This was too much for the friend of the Christ Child. No child who needs care and fresh air must be neglected: a larger home must be found to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers. And so there came into being after many months of patient striving and waiting, of work and of sacrifice, the present home, the "Happy House," the children's fairy-land.

The twenty acres and ample bright house purchased for the sum of $25,000 was in splendid condition, but every year sees some improvement. A chapel has been added; a much-needed wing and sun porch have been erected. And every year more children enjoy its benefits and its healing. As the fairy-story reads in its first pages, it has finally grown into a standard convalescent home where the little ones may remain until they grow strong and well and able to cope with the trials and labors that are the lot of every child of the poor, for there are many tragedies written across the faces of these children.

The Community Chest, of which the society has become a member agency, carries all current expenses, but additional wings, improvements, assets, etc., must fall on the members and friends of the society.

It is a beautiful and inspirational work and destined to accomplish great things. The one who has carried it so far despite shoals and storms, as Christopher of old carried the Christ Child across the rising stream, still carries this work for His little ones with courage and efficiency, having before her an ideal which she sees unfolding each year to a more perfect realization. Despite physical handicap, Miss Mary Merrick is still today its guiding star and inspiration, and from all lovers of little children she deserves encouragement in this noble work, until the goal is reached and no child is turned away with the baffling words that crushed the Heart of that first Little One: "There is no room." Then will the vision be fulfilled.

First Snowflakes

Only the fragant clematis
Is shaking snowflakes on the wall,
Only the fragrant clematis,
And that is all.
And that is all
That has felt death in these soft days
Of early fall,
Of early fall.

The dahlias and the asters nod
Unwithered heads above a sod
That stretches green serene, in seas
Topped by long breakers of green trees.
But soon the emerald of grass
And leaves will fade and pass,
And in the crevice of the wall
Snowflakes will lodge, and we'll recall
The clematis of early fall.

MARION BOYD.

OUTSIDE OF ROME

By ANNE RYAN

OUTSIDE of Rome one street runs into a passageway of deserted houses and old walls, walls built long ago by the legions of Domitian. These are powdery now in the cornices, crumbling, weathered, yet pierced here and there by the shallow recess of a shop or a light braided behind a moving curtain. In the daytime it is a perfectly blank street; night alone gives life to the shadows. The end near the city is still inhabited; toward the country it is lined with deserted houses as flat as the walls of a fortification. There is no outlet the whole way; it merges abruptly into a hill road where loose stones roll into the ditches. Laborers or rustics coming in from the hills feel in this street the first pavements beneath their tread; yet they know they must pass a mile or more between the walls before balconies, steps, spires, bells, appear. It is the last loneliness for them. It is a place where each night a hollow silence returns; echoes leap from wall to wall, and shadows fasten their edges to the sky as though they were sunk in velvet.

One summer a man used to walk there. He was a visitor to Rome, and thought he had discovered this forgotten street for himself. He liked nothing better than to linger under the pale avenue of its sky, and was always surprised at the width of the country at the end. Every time he walked there he imagined he could find something different in the shadows. He was an artist, and strove to remember as he sauntered along what he had learned defining depth, shade or perspective; his whole life he was perpetually on the lookout for something he might use in a stroke or remember in a color.

One night after he had gone a way on the empty street he saw a man walking in the distance before him—a great hulky peasant taking this quiet cut to the beginning of the fields, and he was casting bent-shadows on the flat walls peak after peak. As the artist came nearer, he heard the man humming to himself. Gradually, without realizing it, in the greater and greater silence the peasant raised his voice into a snatch of song, and the tune which had just come into his head echoed in that hollow place, grew, expanded, until it became a river of glowing and mighty sound. The straight walls acted as drums magnifying, receiving, and blending the legato, tender and beautiful as the night itself. It was as if this peasant felt so alone here, so unobserved, that he let spring forth everything which was gay and free in his nature, just as a child acts when unnoticed.

The artist who was following crept from shadow to shadow spying on this voice; the torrent of song pulled their steps into a rhythm; it was something which made them march, yet climb. Soft grey clouds drifted across the heavens. It became darker and darker as they went along, and so beautiful was that voice linked to the darkness that it seemed that the last moment of time was coming toward them, that the doors of eternity must be opened with the next note.

Half way on the road the peasant stopped and went into a wine shop which was no bigger than a niche cut into the wall. And the other entered after him casually. The old woman was surprised to see two customers coming in one after the other. It was as dark as onyx; a dull brazier and a dull candle were like pale ears, listening.

The artist sat down on the darkest bench and concealed his exaltation by examining everything with his eyes. Many things were sold here: bells for sheep, straps for donkeys, and wine in green bottles. The singer stood against the counter and asked for his drink in a mellow, rough voice, and the old woman with the plaid-of-Raphael on her head, served him calmly. Then

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as he sat before the brazier stupidly, a goblet tipping in his hand, she got in a question now and again, looking into his eyes between two of his sips; she asked about the country, the cold on the hills, and the caves for the sheep. Names entered into their talk. In this way the artist learned that the man before him helped an old shepherd at night, and that he used his great strength humbly and simply.

But as she tried to draw him out, a silence grew on the peasant, a silence as heavy as moss. No one would have thought that a little while before he had been free and joyous enough to sing. After a while, without much ceremony, he went out and the wine shop became silent. Then the artist grew drowsy in his corner, and the old woman began to draw down the shutters with her bony hands.

For a week after that the artist waited for the shepherd at the beginning of the road. Every night it was the same thing. To follow that ringing voice between the walls fascinated and compelled him. It became one of the strange episodes of his Italian holiday. The fact that, once started, the shepherd could not get out of the path seemed like a good trick. Each night they came to the wine shop, one a little after the other. The artist never got tired watching the square shoulders which leaned above the narrow counter nor the hands with nails like talons stretching over the brazier for a moment. The shepherd drank his wine silently; then became sullen and dull, and went out without speaking. What the artist found out was this: that the reserve of this man was so great that it seemed unnecessary for him to include any companion; the shepherd had a world in himself and in his songs, a world which he thought no one suspected or noticed. When he went out into the darkness he had already begun to hum. This utter reserve piqued the conceit of the artist who in his own country was something of a personage.

One evening, just as the peasant was about to untie the strings of his purse, the artist spoke to him; he leaned over very carefully and whispered into the bull-like neck very softly, almost timidly, right under the ear. "Sing something," he said, and his eyes were fastened steadily, fixedly, prepared for the shock of the peasant's face. With those two words something terrible was loosed; a labyrinth, a bitterness, was opened. The shepherd turned violently. He was so surprised that his privacy had been intruded upon that he became infuriated. Low and filthy curses of the hills were caught in his hiss, curses colored by the tending of animals; plain and horrible words poured out. The old woman immediately became frightened. This made her push and shove a little. She thought the brazier would be overturned, . . . no one would be allowed to fight in her place. . . . A confusion rose like a heady fume . . . and she locked them both out in the street.

That did not stop the peasant from fighting. Every minute the artist expected to be struck with those terrible clenched fists, bulging and horny, but some instinct made the peasant back away. He wanted to put a distance between himself and the one who had come so close to him. The quarrel rang and echoed. In the midst of this blasphemous rant, a stone was picked up, grabbed from the crumbling walls—a little rock no bigger than a fruit. That was how this shepherd answered an intrusion, and he would have plucked the stars out of the sky or riven the tops of the hills to vent his fury. All this fighting was brought about because unwittingly one had destroyed the core of a secret in the other, had broken open the reserve of a man.

In the receding darkness, with terrible intimacy, they flung vile and mad words like clots of mud. And now they were stoning each other.

COMMUNICATIONS

INFLATION OR HANDS OFF?

Athens, Ga.

TO the Editor: The ease and finality of Mr. William Gidaly's recent pronouncement against inflation must surely be the envy of all economists. His persuasiveness is so intriguing, indeed, that the only wonderment is how the economists—dull fellows though they are—can have made such a pother about a subject which is really so simple.

A program of governmental borrowing to halt deflation, so the argument runs, would simply consummate a transfer of goods from private uses to public disposal ". . . since the funds of bonds purchasers had been previously invested, either directly or through banks, in the production of goods. Thus, by obtaining a loan, the government has borrowed not money but goods."

Ah, me! That, alas, is just the point. The bland assurance that purchasing power flows without let or hindrance into the production and distribution of goods and services, "either directly or through banks," was respectable enough as economic theory, I suppose, some decades ago. It still survives here and there, to be sure, in the teaching of sophomores, and in the ragtag of collegiate texts.

The truth is, the notion is nonsense. The purchasing power of individuals may be withheld from productive functioning, both directly by hoarding, which has been such a devastating phenomenon in our current economic debacle, and indirectly through banks in their scramble to shorten credit lines and pile up reserves whenever the storm clouds gather. It was Wicksell, I believe, who pointed out some twenty years or more ago, that the rate of savings tends to exceed the rate of investment in depression periods.

Incidentally, if Mr. Gidaly is to treat governmental borrowing simply as a transfer of funds or goods from private to public ownership, he may call it altogether stupid if he wishes; but he cannot at the same time consider it as an attempt to rally a lagging price level. Under such an assumption, no new or unused supply of purchasing power is released into the market; and such a release of new or unused means of payment must be effected if the general price level is to be inflated by government borrowing.

Again, if purchasing power is always used, as the assumption goes, it is extraordinarily difficult to account for a deflating price level. For in accordance with that idea, if one commodity, or even a series of commodities, were relatively overproduced and fell in price, the savings to purchasers of these commodities would promptly be diverted to other goods and services, whose prices would necessarily rise under the stimulus of increased buying, leaving the general price level essentially unaffected.

In two instances, the brevity of Mr. Gidaly's article has made him appear somewhat less than fair:

(a) He correctly says that a decline in the price level, as the long, slow sag in the period preceding the turn of the century, does not necessarily stall business; and then he cites the sharp drop from 1920 to 1929, accompanied by prosperity, as another case in point. He fails to add that the drop in this latter period was almost entirely in the 1920 collapse; that the years after the recovery were marked, relatively, by a most notable stability of the price level; and that during the time of sharply falling prices, business did break down with a crash as resounding as the one now ringing in our ears.

(b) He handles the effects of a declining price level with an emphasis on the squeezing out of "speculators'" equities. This is an *ad hominem* appeal, used, I suspect, because speculators are

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unpopular people just now. Yet we all know that the evolution of modern capitalism has separated the ownership of capital from the function of business management, so that business, nowadays, must be preponderantly conducted on borrowed money. Is every business man operating with a line of bank credit, every corporation financed by funded security issues, every insurance company, every government unit, bonded for public improvements: are all these to be cavalierly dismissed as speculators when a declining price level doubles the burden of their obligations and brings ruin in its train? Are your millions of sturdy workmen to be called speculators, forsooth, when, after having been encouraged to build homes, they find themselves beggared by a mortgage that grows in weight as the price level falls?

Finally, the conclusion was: "Attempts at price stabilization, including such experiments as the Farm Board, are absolutely wrong and should not be undertaken." Perhaps so. But the inference here is curious, and probably confusing to the average reader. Proposals to raise the price level by increasing the amount of money and credit in the business pool are by no means at one with price pegging activities applied to particular commodities, as in the Farm Board case. The board, obviously, cannot peg a few special prices when the commodities concerned are overproduced in relation to the other goods being offered in exchange for them, and when, even more importantly, the general price level is falling in consequence of the removal of vast supplies of credit from business uses. This has no connection, however, with suggestions that the drainage or sequestration of money or credits be stopped or reversed—any more than the failure of an effort to raise the general level of a pond by putting more water into it can be argued from the fact that, when water was rapidly flowing out, an attempt to hold a few particular ripples up to their previous altitude proved unavailing.

MALCOLM H. BRYAN.

CHRIST IN ART

Overbrook, Pa.

TO the Editor: In THE COMMONWEAL of August 24, 1932, in your comment on the mural in the Old Congregational Church of Chatham, Massachusetts, I was much interested to see you call attention to the artist's daring in departing from artistic convention by portraying Christ unbearded, etc. At the time Christ lived on earth only philosophers and Jewish mourners wore beards, and authorities on those times tell us it is altogether wrong to portray Christ bearded. Quoting C. R. Morey in *Liturgical Arts,* Fall, 1931: "From the second half of the fourth century the Asiatic East and Italy began to add the beard . . . which has become traditional in Christian art."

MARY T. GEST.

GREAT CHARITY

Oshkosh, Wis.

TO the Editor: I quote: "Everyone, therefore, who can bend his will and his resources to the creation of a better social order, he also will be rendering charitable service, one which may be the most merciful of all." This is an extract from an editorial paragraph in THE COMMONWEAL of August 24.

A two-acre plot of ground in Milwaukee yields $200,000 a year net. That value is created by society. It is paid to private individuals. They make no return for it.

Let us read "Progress and Poverty" again and see if we have intelligence enough to understand it. Few have. Some refuse.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

THE PLAY AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Here Today

THERE is still nothing of the clarion call in the early plays of the season—little of anything, in fact, to make it plain that the theatre has had a whole summer in which to rest, to take stock of its signal weaknesses of last year, and to try to discover what have been its fundamental mistakes. Instead, we find such a talented actress as Ruth Gordon largely wasted on an accumulation of wise-cracks entitled "Here Today." To be sure, this inconsequential bit is staged by George S. Kaufman, and its author, George Oppenheimer, tries to differentiate it from a thousand other pieces by calling it "a comedy of bad manners." But plays, whether the fluffiest of comedies or the starkest of tragedies, need more than personalities and phrases to make them interesting. They need, above all, a little solid and plain thinking behind their themes, and a sense of proportion and background.

"Here Today" attempts to give a new twist to the very old story of a divorced couple who are thrown together only to discover that their divorce was a greater mistake than their original marriage and that the best thing they can possibly do is to get married all over again. Philip Graves, a novelist of a sort, has fallen in love with Claire Windrew, a Boston damsel, and has followed her to the Bahamas, in spite of the fact that she is already engaged to Spencer Grant, scion of an old Boston family.

All goes smoothly, and Claire thinks she is in love with Philip, until Philip's divorced wife, Mary Hilliard, appears on the scene with her distinctly platonic traveling companion, Stanley Dale, with whom she collaborates on plays. Then it is that Claire discovers how far she is from sharing the mental kinship of true vagabonds. When Philip, Stanley and Mary are together, Claire is left entirely out of the conversation. Their nonsensical banter, their irresponsibility and especially their reminiscences leave her not only cold but uneasy. She wants solid things and certainties. They are the type who are "here today," but tomorrow—?

All this might, in the hands of an expert playwright, serve as material for a reasonably good comedy of the ramshackle life of today. Philip Barry held to a similar theme in "Paris Bound." But Mr. Oppenheimer is intent upon making a wise-cracking farce out of the situation. He introduces a loud-mouthed dowager in the person of Claire's mother, and makes her talk as no Boston dowager ever talked, even in sleep. He decides to have Mary Hilliard and Stanley Dale help, at first, in breaking off Claire's engagement to Spencer Grant by cooking up an imaginary scandal which later turns out to be real. Then, as Mary finds out that she is still in love with Philip and wants him back, the whole process is reversed. The motivations get seriously mixed up, the farce becomes overcomplicated and heavy, the dialogue gets increasingly coarse and the play generally topples to pieces.

The character of the divorced wife, Mary Hilliard, in fact, is never well drawn, thus creating a central weakness from which the play never really emerges. She is supposed to be a clever playwright, but acts more like an indeterminate moron with an instinct for getting her man. Ruth Gordon exaggerates this effect by failing to show that subtle superiority which makes clever comedy effective in the hands of Ethel Barrymore. A number of Mary's remarks, including her deliberate rudeness on every possible occasion, are supposed to be facetious or ironic. Miss Gordon, however, never makes a clear dis-

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tinction between such deliberate idiocy and her real scenes of confusion.

In justice to the author, it is possible that more of the Philip Barry quality of whimsical dialogue might attach to the play in the hands of other actors. The present cast, and Mr. Kaufman as director, never appear to have made up their minds as to the true character or inflection of any of the dialogue. Charlotte Granville as the terrible Boston (?) mother is by far the best exhibit in the play. For the rest, it is pretty dull going in a play that is forced quite out of shape. (At the Ethel Barrymore Theatre.)

Two against the World

CONSTANCE BENNETT is, of course, a rising (or, should we say, risen?) star in the film world, and it may be that she will find, some day, a vehicle in which she can do more than give arch looks and wear the smartest of clothes. There are hints, during occasional moments of "Two against the World," of real dramatic power, but the part given her does not make heavy demands.

The story is one of those affairs in which an impetuous and flapperish girl meets a hard-working young attorney and is in a fair way to make him her devoted slave when he happens to be appointed to prosecute a murder trial in which she herself is dangerously involved. Instead of refusing the case, he goes through with it, much to her chagrin. In the end, however, being mentally convinced that she is innocent, he fails to push the case—thus laying the groundwork for renewal of the romance after she has been finally cleared.

Plots of this sort always give one the impression of being written chiefly to bring about certain scenes which are supposed to be good movie fare. They have no inherent merit either in theme or in characterization, and no one seems to care particularly whether they work out logically or not. They are not dull, from the simple fact that they maintain action at every stage, but they leave one conscious of a distinct waste of time. Possibly the most amusing part of this picture is the scene of an alleged ball in one of the great New York mansions of the rich. At a given moment, the guests stand solemnly aside while a magnificent female, under the weight of a diamond tiara, makes her imperial entrance. She is none other than New York's society leader! One awaits breathlessly the day when Hollywood will learn the awful truth about such moments in real life!

I Kiss Your Hand, Madame

BILLED as "the picture that made Marlene Dietrich," this latest importation and revival in the foreign film playhouses provides some entertaining commentaries on the progress of international stardom. It was made in the forgotten era of abbreviated skirts. But that fact is not half so quaint as the solemn purpose it shows of being just unsurpassedly romantic and sentimental—nothing less than the love-affair of a head waiter (formerly a Russian nobleman) and an exotic lady of the half-world. Excessively slow in pace, rather shabbily photographed against a Parisian background, the picture does little more than remind one how poor the German films could be when they were not responding to some theme of leaping imagination.

If it was actually this picture which opened the stellar spaces to Miss Marlene Dietrich, then our motion picture casting directors have something rather more than a sixth sense to guide them.

BOOKS

One Modern Man

The Burning Bush, by Sigrid Undset; translated by Arthur G. Chater. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

AFTER the long, slow start of "The Wild Orchid," in which probably only the experienced Undset reader discerned the actual significance and promise, there comes fulfilment in the shape of this sequel and conclusion entitled "The Burning Bush." And it *is* a fulfilment. It rounds into a kind of deeply motivated and quietly irresistible action and, finally, a spiritual climax, which make it as remarkable as Mme. Undset's rich and fully wrought mediaeval epics. And it widens one's sense of her power as even the creation of another of those epics could not do. For it accomplishes what is essentially their achievement without one of their adventitious aids of glamor, remoteness or heroic tradition. It tells a particular human story—the story of Paul Selmer—with that constant connotation of the universal which is the secret of great art, and that deepened sense of spiritual identity and destiny which is the secret of Catholicism; and the life which is thus interpreted in terms of what is most august and lasting in experience, is modern, middle-class, suffering the unlovely restrictions of an ordinary business career, and devoid of any special artistic or temperamental color.

Paul Selmer is not a warrior or a hero; nor, though he has acute moral perceptions, whose growth forms the core of the novel, is he a saint. Moreover, this low level of what may be called natural excitement or significance in the mere material, this careful neutrality of tone, is repeated in Paul's environment and the circumstances of his life. His father, a good but not at all illustrious scientist, never emerges into the relief of full development; robbed of his children and his wife by the divorce which that high-handed lady had insisted upon, he occupies the background of their lives (with his good-hearted, vulgar second choice), "a good sport," "a gentleman," the mere shadow of an entity. Julie Selmer, Paul's mother, feminist, liberal and savagely independent, begins by having a good deal of color in her own right; but as in the case of most doctrinaires, it seems to depend on her formula, and when Julie's formula—the sunny, ostensibly open-minded paganism in which she rears her children—becomes outmoded, her personality seems almost to ebb away. The two women who touch Paul's adult life most closely are completely common; though Lucy, the milliner's apprentice, whom he changelessly loves from the moment when, in the baleful innocence of his "sunny paganism," he makes her his mistress, till her sad death years later—Lucy is common, as a tree is common; whereas Björg, whom he marries in indifferent conformity after losing Lucy, is common is being shallow, obtuse, snobbish and morally undergrown.

This is the material from which Mme. Undset gives us an authentic sense of the drama of mortality; and this is the human setting in which she shows us irresistibly the germ of Catholic conviction growing in the mind and soul of Paul Selmer. There is no division, in her, between the artistic mood and approach, and the religious. Though this is a story of conversion, and some account of intellectual growth and change is necessarily included, the unity and integrity of the whole are never violated. Nothing is imposed from without on Paul's life, though there are deep and sundering changes, and the end cannot be foreseen from the beginning. Rather, each experience prepares for, leads to, the next, and the natural finally to the supernatural; with the kind of casual inevitability that does attend conversion,

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and seems to make it the mark, not of accidental favor or violent effort, but of spiritual normality; as is suggested by the immortal boast: *Anima naturaliter christiana.* From Paul's first loving impatience, that he himself does not understand, with Julie and her self-sufficient millennium; from his uncomprehending pity for his father; from his passion for Lucy, illicit but pure in the sense that he wishes to regard it as a final commitment; from his first uneasiness of conscience regarding the agreeable apathy in which he married Björg—Paul is unconsciously struggling into the stature of a Catholic.

This narrative of Paul's life has a living quality, poignancy and deep dramatic truth. Its quietude is what marks it and remains in the mind: quietude not in the sense that it is without action, but in the sense that relegates action and the clamor of action in favor of the profounder meaning of the choices of the soul. It is quietly driven not by emotion but by inescapable conviction, that he enters the Church: "Afterward it would have to be God's affair to thaw him and put fresh vital sap into the dried-up mass of tissue that composed his soul." Twice thereafter external events focus sharply, once about Björg and once about Lucy; and both times the nature of the challenge to Paul subdues the outside occurrence almost to an irrelevance.

With poor, witless little Björg, the assault is subtle: after she has run away, impelled by a mischief-making mother, he can lure her back to him and their children with the affectionate cajoleries and playful promises suited to her concrete mind and limited understanding; he can receive her and the half-witted babe who is not his own, with pitying kindness, and defend his "unmanly" softness to his infuriated mother. But can he keep from the insufferable spiritual condescension which would make such kindnesses a deadly insult, by denying their recipient any real humanity or worth? That is the true struggle. With Lucy, the temptation is more obvious, but even harder. She reappears in his life with a triple claim upon his heart: he still loves her; she is poor and in desperate difficulty; and, most troubling of all, he learns that she left him long ago by noble choice, for his sake.

It is upon Lucy's end, tragic but peaceful, that the book also closes. A beautiful book, full of illumined and touching truths about men and women, it has no more beautiful episode than this concluding one. The nature of the girl, so simple and loving and yet so unfathomable; the nature of the man's enduring feeling for her; the cruelty of his trial; the childlike yet exalted innocence of his triumph; the generosity of his last service to her—all combine into an inspired picture of one of those significant moments of life when the fragments and torn ends come together into a beauty that reflects the mind of God.

This does not suffice to do more than point out the salient features of a great Catholic novel. It has literary virtues, in its manner of writing, the wholeness of its conceptions, the deep incidental life of its characters, which its readers must discover for themselves. May they be many!

MARY KOLARS.

Memorials of an Adventurer

I Have No Regrets, by Lieutenant Bringolf; edited by Blaise Cendrars; translated by Warre B. Wells. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $3.50.

IF, AS Blaise Cendrars says in his prefatory note, Lieutenant Bringolf is really "no more," a most delightfully colorful person, and one who isn't half as bad as he at times thinks he is, has departed this life. But the suspicion will not down that somehow Mr. Cendrars has been misinformed

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NEXT WEEK

AMERICAN COLLECTIVISM, by James Blaine Walker, jr., discusses a fundamental issue that is confronting us in this country now as never before. The antithesis to collectivism, "rugged individualism" is perhaps familiar as a theory, but Mr. Walker considers it a fact that "we Americans are known much less for individualism than for our collectivism—meaning, in this case, our ability to get along one with another and to achieve certain practical results by group action or team work." He adds, "if one were to proceed with the specific and practical development of this idea, one might define American collectivism as the idea of attempting the stabilization of improved economic conditions by accelerating the trend toward extended group activity already strongly manifest in business in the United States." Mr. Walker dissipates myths and mists from a subject that is of unique importance and that has been sadly confused in the minds of many by attempts at popularization. . . . THE IRISH LAND ANNUITIES, by John A. Ryan, professor of moral theology and industrial ethics in the Catholic University of America, cites lucidly the reasons for the writer's statement, "My own opinion is that the legal case for retention of the annuities by the Free State government is so feeble that it would be promptly and completely rejected by any impartial tribunal . . . and that the moral case has sufficient merit to call for free negotiation or arbitration." . . . THE RETURN OF BERGSON, by Pierre Linn, is an illuminating article on the crowning work of a great living philosopher. . . . IMMIGRATION AND THE CRIME WAVE, by T. St. John Gaffney discusses the circumstance that crimes of violence have more than doubled in America during a period in which immigration to our shores has steadily diminished, and comes to some startling conclusions.

for *chevaliers d'industrie* of the vitality of Lieutenant Bringolf are exceedingly hard to kill. Perhaps Lieutenant Bringolf, weary of the pranks played upon him by "that inconstant jade, Fortune," has simply decided to change his name and luck. And if he is in the land of the living—this gentleman-adventurer, diplomat-vagrant, and rogue though he once was—all who read his memoirs will wish him well. For though he cheated his fellow Swiss in foreign lands, he cheated them amusingly, and he was punished in far more than his due proportion. And at the end he rose to be a Commandant in the French Army, was decorated a half-dozen times for bravery, and finally after the war received the Legion of Honor.

It would be impossible to tell the tale of this extraordinary Swiss ex-diplomat in any short review. Suffice it to say that he was by turns a court figure in Berlin and Vienna, an officer in the Philippine constabulary, a dishwasher in the Argentine, a jail-bird both in South America and in Germany, an heroic soldier of the Foreign Legion, and a business man in the Saar and in Alsace after the war. But his past followed him, and the volume closes with his dismissal from his post in Strasbourg. It is a delightful story that he tells, and one, unlike the memoirs of so many former adventurers, free from cant, so that even before he reforges his soul in the furnace of war, one gets to like him immensely.

Bringolf, and it is unthinkable that there never was a Bringolf, is a figure out of a larger, freer age than the one he had the misfortune to have been born into. He is a rogue at times, but a rogue from weakness rather than vice. His self-analysis rings throughout true, and so do the adventures through which he passes. As he names names and dates, his experiences can be checked up. Surely no one who had not experienced them could have written his adventures on the Balkan front. Yes, Bringolf must have existed—and to all intents and purposes as he has set himself down in these pages.

Lieutenant Bringolf is a Swiss, but he is peculiarly un-Swiss in his character, that is if the Swiss character is what it is supposed to be. And yet Switzerland also produced Jean Jacques Rousseau, Marat and Madame De Stael—the world's supreme sentimentalist, one of its greatest blood-drinkers and one of its greatest female humanists. And now in Lieutenant Hans Bringolf it has presented us with one of its most engaging adventurers.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Bad Street

What Price Wall Street, by Forrest Davis. New York: William Godwin, Incorporated. $3.00.

IN "WHAT PRICE WALL STREET" Mr. Davis, after a summary review of our major periods of prosperity and depression, concludes that stock speculation is guilty of the preponderant responsibility for the troubles which come in eras of depression. Furthermore, that Wall Street is to blame for this speculation. While the accusation is specific, there is considerable ambiguity as to the identity of the accused. In places one gathers that the definitely limited group in Wall Street engaged in stock exchange business is the guilty party. In other pages, our whole financial system, or any "traders for profit," seems to be under indictment.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Davis has set himself a task of bewildering proportions. In order to reach a fairly wide field of readers, he has attempted a dramatic picturization of sensational incidents remotely related to his subject, beginning with that of Christ and the money lenders in the temple, down to

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the operations of recent spectacular Wall Street operators. One chapter title, "Pirates, Slave Traders and Stock Brokers," gives a pretty good inkling of the method used. On such a framework he hangs a rambling economic discussion of the many weaknesses in our financial structure. However, success in making his exposition popular has militated against a fair and accurate treatment of the really serious question which he poses in his title. In an effort to be readable he has ceased to be believable.

In spite of, or perhaps rather because of, this weakness in the serious development of his case, Mr. Davis has written entertainingly and well. His style is smooth and treatment dramatic. In picturing the fascinating conflict between the old "bear" Dan'l Drew and the "bull" Corneel Vanderbilt, he has been so graphic and absorbing that one can actually hear Dan'l stump around in his muddy drover's boots and visualize the monarchical bearded and hard-swearing Corneel swinging up Broadway behind his fast trotters to his picturesque Washington Square home. All of which is by way of saying that "What Price Wall Street" will provide entertainment but contributes little to the literature of sound economics.

JAMES BLAINE WALKER, JR.

Irish Catholics

The Irish Way; edited by F. J. Sheed. New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons. $1.75.

THE IRISH way, to which the title of this book refers, is the way the Irish have of being holy or of being Catholics. Such an unusual theme rests on the supposition that grace does not destroy nature, and that, though the saints are Catholic in the fullest sense of the word, as belonging to the Church universal, they do not, therefore, cease to be national, but rather to be more national inasmuch as their racial and national characteristics are sublimated by faith. What the distinctively Irish characteristics in the sphere of sanctity may be, the reader must gather for himself. This is not a systematic attempt to isolate or to describe such characteristics, if they exist, but to illustrate Irish holiness by short biographies of eighteen persons who excelled as exemplars of Christian faith.

The biographies written by fifteen different authors, chosen because they are Irish, cover a wide period of time and run from Saint Patrick to Matt Talbot. Each writer was permitted to select some person or persons who exhibited in an eminent degree Christian fervor or sanctity. Because of the manner in which the work was planned, no exception can be taken to the inclusion of the names of Saint Patrick, Saint Brendan, Saint Columcille, Saint Malachy and Saint Laurence O'Toole in a list of typical Irish saints. Of those whose lives lay in the modern period none is a saint and only one, Oliver Plunket, is beatified. Among them are three martyrs, Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, Blessed Oliver Plunket and Father Thaddeus Moriarty; a missionary, the Jesuit Father Thomas Fihilly, and the founder of a missionary college, Father John Hand; a scholar, Michael O'Clery; a preacher, Father Mathew; a chaplain, the Jesuit Father Doyle; a day-laborer, Matt Talbot; and three founders of religious congregations, Catherine McCauley, Mary Aikenhead and Margaret Mary Hallahan.

Taken together, these lives offer a noble record of high and fruitful effort in the cause of religion. If they are to be taken as characteristic of the Catholicism of the Irish people, they show in an extraordinary degree a spirit of fervor and asceticism.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

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These questions, as well as many others, are discussed in

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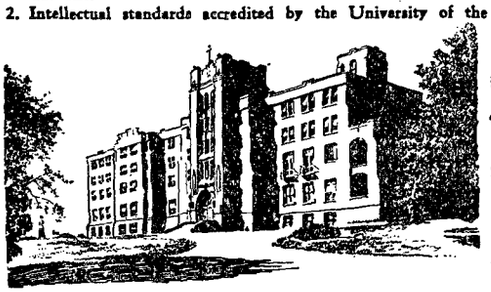

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Briefer Mention

Theoretical Psychology, by Johannes Lindworsky, S.J.; translated by Harry R. De Silva. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company. $1.25.

FATHER LINDWORSKY, some of whose books have previously been made available to American readers, is one of the most eminent among living Catholic psychologists. The object of the present manual, which Professor De Silva has rendered into excellent English, is to supply the outlines of a theoretical psychology calculated to do for this otherwise hopelessly empirical science what theoretical physics has done for the laboratory student. This is, to be sure, a somewhat ambitious project. Nevertheless, Father Lindworsky establishes laws of content, form and process on the basis of conclusions reasonably well established by a host of critical and factual investigators. The book is a little inconvenient for American students because the author limits himself almost entirely to the German psychologists. One of the most important aspects of the volume is its evaluation of the Gestalt theory. We heartily commend writing so sure to focus attention upon essential and illuminating problems. The translator very appropriately remarks: "In view of the chaotic state of psychology in this country, we should be fortunate if more psychologists would attempt . . . to emulate Professor Lindworsky's impersonal and relativistic yet consistent attitude."

Washington Swindle Sheet, by William P. Helm. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. $2.50.

MR. HELM, one of the now inevitable and ubiquitous Washington correspondent authors, got hold of a copy of the Secretary of the Senate's annual report for 1931. This seemed to him so juicy a morsel that he decided to reissue it, in a handsome big volume with a pleasing buff-and-blue cover, with annotations of his own. Naturally the said annotations are supposed to be the meat of the volume, but in reality they can be termed little more than a sequence of melancholy ejaculations anent the senatorial scale of living. Sometimes the remarks are pertinent; sometimes, unfortunately, they are a trifle funny, as when Mr. Helm goes out of breath because a commission of Senators traveled South in compartments instead of sections. Appended is a study, originally made for the Chicago *Tribune*, of the rising cost of living at the White House. One should like to believe that this is a book of some importance. But it isn't. The material is of no great interest, nor are the sins it enumerates more than peccadillos when set against the background of general post-war American extravagance.

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